

# **CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**MARCH 17, 2011**

**PRESENT:** Diane Ripple, Missy Kueht-Becker, James Pearson, Joe Vitale, Cheri Sylla, Sara Carpenter, Katie Miller, Sarah Badeau, Faith Holley-Beal, Judy Hickey, Don Harris, Alyssa Schroeder, Barb Holtz, Lisa McLean, Amy Baumann

**STAFF PRESENT:** Antwayne Robertson, Pete Slesar, Jesus Mireles, Mary Anderson

Diane Ripple called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Don Harris made a motion, seconded by Joe Vitale, to approve the minutes of the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **BOARD LIAISON REPORT**

Joe Vitale reported that the last HHS Board meeting was short. Susie Austen, AODA Advisory Board Chair, presented the AODA Advisory Committee's unmet needs. Cathy Bellovary, ADRC, gave an update on NACO prescription discount card, which give people the ability to get a discount on drugs if there is no insurance coverage. There is no registration; simply get the card and use it. Most pharmacies accept it. The CJCC gave an update and a statistic of the month. There is still much uncertainty in the budget.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESSES IN OUR SCHOOLS**

Diane introduced Cheri Sylla of CESA#1 (Cooperative Educational Service Agency #1). Back in November, she explained her role as a parent liaison coordinator, and the group asked her to return to expand on the information presented.

Cheri began by stating her agency is currently involved in determining what impact the new Senate bill relating to charter schools will have on public schools.

She explained that her agency is involved in services for students with disabilities. She shared a video from the Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative (WSPEI) website and handed out the brochure on the WSPEI project. She is part of the State's Department of Public Instruction, which is funded by the WSPEI federal grant. She also distributed copies of a booklet 'An Introduction to Special Education'. When a child is referred for an evaluation to determine if he/she should receive special education, they typically ask school districts to give parents this booklet, explaining the program in language that is understandable. They are in the process of updating the booklet. There's a new section being added regarding situations when a parent revokes their consent to have their child receive special education.

She took us to the Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative Information, Especially for Parents page of the State education website. She explained the various information available from this page. There's a link to check on different school districts performance scores and ratings from parents on special education. All indicators can be viewed. If a parent has a disagreement, there's a grievance page. Under publications, there's an introduction (the booklet she shared with the group), which is also available in Spanish and Hmong. There is a section on special education rights for parents and special education in plain language. For anyone wanting to order printed materials, there's an order form on the website.

Cheri played a DVD about special education, which included an introduction to special education from the statewide parent initiative. Federal laws require schools to provide special education for those who need it. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) must be provided. The DVD explained how they evaluate and determine the individual unique needs. It's not just a curriculum, but a program individualized to the child. The process starts with a referral which can be from parents, medical professional, or teachers. It detailed what specific information should be included in a letter to the school stating this is a referral for special education. Next there is an evaluation (tests, observation). The third step is the IEP (Individualized Education Program). The IEP Team, which consists of the parents, child (when appropriate), teacher, principal, has a meeting. Results of tests are shared and needs are discussed during this meeting. Parents will receive a report on the evaluation and set up another meeting after they read and understand the report. Placement is based on the IEP. Children usually attend a school with children that don't have disabilities. After reviewing the written IEP, parents sign a consent form. The written IEP may involve other people invited by the parent or the school. All staff follow the IEP. Parents will receive reports from the school and should communicate often. There's an annual review to determine any changes that need to be made to the IEP or placement. Students are re-evaluated every three years. The IEP is the heart of the child's education. Parents are encouraged to keep a file. The team may recommend extended school year services.

The DVD highlighted how to resolve differences, which may include discussion or a letter, or requesting a team meeting. There's also mediation available. Parents are equal partners in the planning and participation, and should know their rights. The DVD gave contact phone numbers for more information.

Cheri brought her most recent newsletter and shared copies. It lists upcoming events occurring at CESA#1, Parents Place, United Cerebral Palsy is hosting an informational session, and other events.

For anyone interested, there was a handout regarding a workshop Cheri is presenting on the IEP process. Cheri talked about having done this in January and there was such a good response, she is doing this again March 30<sup>th</sup>. There was discussion about some students not being identified with reading disabilities until middle school. The workshop is meant for parents and educators. It's made easy to understand for parents.

Jesús asked for suggestions on ways to support families. According to Cheri, it is good to connect parents with other parents that have been through it. That is a strong resource. She suggested maintaining a list of parents willing to share.

Antwayne asked if parents have expressed concerns over the new state budget reform bill. Cheri stated she has heard from educators, but not from parents yet. Educators have real concerns about the number of school days being reduced as suggested in the budget reform bill. If the number of days is reduced, the length of the day would have to be extended, as there is a required number of hours per year.

There was discussion about charter schools, the voucher program, and the money following the student. Antwayne talked about the students who leave the public school and the money goes with them, but if they are returned for any reason to the public school, the money doesn't come back with them. They talked about how that works and what the schools are required to do. Barb commented that a lot of schools use teachers aids to help with special education students. They are concerned about losing their jobs. This will severely impact both the special education and regular education students. Cheri talked about parent involvement groups such as Parent Café's, and thinks schools will have to look outside their four walls to groups like this for assistance.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Jesús reported that the new co-chair for 2011 is Patrick Jauquet. They are updating the members for the advisory committee and subcommittee; making sure there is the right percentage of parents on the committee. The State applied for B-3 waiver and has withdrawn its application and plans for a different federal funding program later this year.

## **NEEDS LIST**

Diane walked through the needs presentation. The county's strategic plan is still in place, and Diane wants to reinforce the importance of how prevention programs keep the county safe. Barb Holtz commented on money saved by what county gives to a number of agencies working with children to prevent child abuse, and what it would cost to have a few of those children go into the really deep-end services. Diane showed the slide on decreased funding source, which are reduced across the board, while demand for services is going up. Diane discussed having a one page handout with client testimonials to be given to board members. She asked members to send testimonials to her electronically. There was discussion on the time to read maybe one testimonial and handing out the rest. Cheri suggested having the board members read the testimonials throughout and relating to the slides. Sara Carpenter suggested maybe taking some of the environmental scan slides out of the presentation. Diane proposed taking out the positive outcomes slide, but just talking about it or making it more visual. Missy discussed showing the consequences, "if you cut this then deep end, mandatory services will cost this". What are the anticipated realistic consequences of reductions? Katie Miller proposed instead of using testimonials, ask the board members to read the agencies individual anticipated impacts. If we are cut 10%, 20%, 40%, than this is what it would mean to whom. Diane asked if people can prepare and get her that information by Friday. Diane request people respond to her with what it

would look like, at program level, if they reduce 20%, 40% and 60%. They discussed keeping it in one document, with a total. Pete Slesar implied they don't need to have every agency; just pick some to be representative.

Joe suggested that he ask the board chair to schedule different organizations to present in a proactive manner; not to do with the budget, but just informational.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 8:30 in the Board Room of the Human Services Center.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Joe Vitale motioned to adjourn, seconded by Sara Carpenter at 10:09 a.m.

Approved on: 5-19-11  
date